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Cosmogenic ^{32}Si as a potential tracer for the global marine silicon cycle processes: A review

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Title: Cosmogenic ^{32}Si as a potential tracer for the global marine silicon cycle processes: A review

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Abstract: Silicon is the second most abundant element (27.7%) after oxygen in the Earth's crust. It plays an important role in regulating primary productivity and carbon cycling in the oceans. Cosmogenic ^{32}Si (a half-life of approximately 150 years) is the only long-lived radioisotope, which can be produced by cosmic rays impinging on atmospheric ^{40}Ar and falling as precipitation on lands (partly into oceans through runoff) and oceans. ^{32}Si is taken up by siliceous organisms (e.g., diatoms), partly recycled, and partly eventually transported to the seafloor as biogenic silica (BSi). This paper summarizes ^{32}Si and silicon cycling studies in nearshore (including estuaries), continental shelf waters, and the open ocean. Recent studies have demonstrated that ^{32}Si can independently constrain diagenetic processes controlling Si storage in marine sediments. Biogenic silica (BSiopal) is rapidly altered to authigenic clay phases (BSiyclay) to variable extents depending on depositional environment. In tropical sediments, ^{32}Si is in mineral rather than biogenic (reactive) silica pools used to constrain the silica cycle. Coastal reactive Si burial rates are likely 20-30% higher globally than previously estimated. Tropical and subtropical deltas store 3.5–3.9 Tmol/yr of Si as authigenic clay (BSiyclay), and temperate proximal coastal zones store ~1 Tmol/yr. Global sedimentary Si sink via reverse weathering reactions is 2 to 3 times the current estimates and exceeds the Southern Ocean siliceous ooze.

Keyword: silicon-32; a cosmic-ray-produced radioactive nuclide; global marine silicon cycle; oceanography

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